

The
Official Organ
OF
The
Socialist Party
OF
Great Britain.

THE SOCIALIST STANDARD

No. 2. Vol. I.]

LONDON, OCTOBER, 1904.

[MONTHLY, ONE PENNY

Is There a Class War?

MR. J. KEIR-HARDIE, M.P.,
ANSWERS "YES-NO" AND
"NO-YES!"

THE "Socialist" humorist of the day is Mr. J. Keir Hardie, M.P. At least, Mr. Hardie *claims* to be a Socialist. Of his humour there is no question. That it is unconscious humour makes the gentleman's contortions even a little pitiful. Mr. Hardie has Capitalist friends. He is a Reform politician. One of his methods of advancing Socialism is to give electoral support to non-Socialists—he would, in fact, cast out Beelzebub by means of Beelzebub. Consequently, he appears to find himself in this dilemma: he desires to "moralise" the capitalists; thinks it possible that the wolves of Commercialism will loose their hold upon their prey voluntarily, and, whilst he is incapable of arguing the position, feels instinctively that he cannot reconcile reform with the fundamental principle of the class war, without recognition of which no scientific theory of Socialism is possible.

In order to conclusively prove this statement it is only necessary to place together the contradictory expressions used by Mr. Keir Hardie himself in a recent article entitled "An Indictment of the Class War."

Mr. Hardie states on the one hand:

"For my own part, I have always maintained that to claim for the Socialist movement that it is a 'class' war dependent for its success upon the 'class' consciousness of one section of the community, is doing Socialism an injustice, and indefinitely postponing its triumph. It is, in fact, lowering it to the level of a mere faction fight."

On the other hand, he also states:

"Now, it is not disputed that there is a conflict of interests between those who own property and those who work for wages. The tenant and his landlord and the worker and his employer have interests which lead to inevitable conflict and antagonism, and the object of Socialism is the removal of the causes which produce this antagonism."

It appears, then, that "conflict" is not "war" and "antagonism" means—mutual interest between two opposing classes! Perhaps Mr. Hardie also considers confusion the same thing as clearness.

Later, this amusingly superficial thinker states "the working class is not a class, it is the nation." How it can be a class and not a class at the same time we leave Mr. Hardie to explain, and he may also let us know what he means by the following:

"Socialism will come, not by a war of classes, but by economic circumstances forcing the proletariat into a revolt, which will absorb the middle class, and thus wipe out classes together."

Thus we have a class which is not a class, a nation without classes, which yet contains a working class and a middle class, the revolt—not war!—of the former which is to "absorb" the latter and the wiping out of classes with-

out those hostile operations which, in ordinary language, are tersely denominated war. And all this confused medley of what is either ignorant stupidity or deliberate misleading in order that Mr. Keir Hardie may somehow or the other cover the defeat of himself, of his friend Jaures and of the Utopians generally at the International Congress.

But whilst we may smile at the scarcely concealed anger and dismay of the Confusionists at the growth of uncompromising Socialism, it becomes a rather more serious matter when we find this moral philosopher misquoting the works of recognised exponents of scientific Socialism and claiming that such men as, for instance, Belfort Bax, are supporting his compromising attitude. In his well-known "Ethics of Socialism," this author has stated:

"All class-character *qua* class character is bad . . . The particular class-qualities in the character of the modern capitalist may be roughly indicated by the definition, *vulgarity is a solution of hypocrisy*; the particular class-qualities in the character of the modern proletarian as *brutality is a solution of servility*."

Mr. Hardie leaves out the three essential words "*qua* class-character," and makes Bax's definitions to read respectively—

"*Vulgarity is a solution of hypocrisy*," and "*brutality is a solution of servility*."

By this substitution Mr. Hardie totally alters the character of the thought expressed.

In non-ethical circles this is known as dishonesty.

But not content with mutilating what he does quote, Mr. Hardie leaves out all those portions of the article in question which would enable his readers to gain an intelligent idea of the author's real meaning. Will it be believed that in this very essay, Mr. Bax contemptuously dismisses the Keir Hardie attitude as that of a—

"Benevolent old gentleman who says, 'Let us ignore classes, let us regard each other as human beings,'"

And as that of the "benevolent bourgeois Radical"?

It seems most remarkable that anyone noting the differentiation between natural class-instinct and the political class conscious action of the workers insisted on by Bax can possibly hold Mr. Hardie's conclusions. For does not Bax say in the same article:

"Classes exist; you may ignore them, but they will exist still with the respective characters they engender. Though you ignore them, they will not ignore you. . . In the Socialist workman the class-instinct has become transformed into the conviction that, in the words of Lassalle, 'he is called to raise the principle of his class into the principle of the age.' He knows that in the moment of victory—of the realisation of the dominion of his class—the ugly head of class itself must fall, and society emerge. Militant, his cause is identified with class; triumphant, with Humanity."

Poor, indeed, must be the case of the Reformist reactionaries when they have to bolster up their absurd and contemptible position by misquotation and suppression. The marvellous thing is that any intelligent being should be duped by such palpable dishonesty.

H. J. HAWKINS.

PARTY NOTES.

THE encouraging results attending our outdoor propaganda continue. New members are being enrolled every week. But if comrades in charge of the meetings would keep a sharper look out greater results still would be achieved.

At the close of the meetings, one can usually observe a few persons remaining after the bulk of the audience has gone away. In many cases these persons are waiting to be approached by our members. They are a little shy of taking the initiative, but our comrades should break the ice and introduce themselves in a friendly way.

Then a quiet suggestion could be made that if they find themselves in agreement with the position of the speaker to whom they have just been listening, they ought to join the party and help to spread the light. On the other hand, any point on which there may exist any misconception could be plainly elucidated and the listeners will go away impressed with the opinion that at any rate the members of The Socialist Party of Great Britain have a sincere desire to impart a knowledge of the true position of the working class.

THE SOCIALIST STANDARD, if we judge by the first number, has been a success. The sales have been good. We have to thank the many readers who have expressed their appreciation of its contents.

While we recognise the strenuous efforts made by our comrades in disposing of the papers, we trust that they will not slacken those efforts. We fully realise that we have brought out our paper at the worst possible time—the end of our summer propagandist season. That being so, we must rely on our members to use their best endeavours to boom the paper in the winter months. The paper is the property of the party, and its success is desired by all who have the best interests of the party at heart.

Since our last issue we have to chronicle the formation of two new branches—one in Clerkenwell, London, and the other in the Romford Division of Essex. All Socialists in these districts should get in touch with these branches so as to make them the nuclei of strong local bodies.

We have had further requests for information from various parts of the country, and we think the result will be that in the near future we shall be able to record the formation of branches in the provinces.

Any Socialist desiring to obtain information as to the constitution or principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain will receive courteous consideration at our hands. We shall always be willing to satisfy any doubts in the minds of our correspondents or to give them any information.

Any Socialists residing in any district where no branch of the party exists may, pending the formation of such branch, become members of the Central Branch of the party.

C. LEHANE.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

General Meeting.

At the Communist Club, 107, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, London, W., on Sept. 18, 1904, was held the general meeting of The Socialist Party of Great Britain. A good muster of the members were present. The Secretary having called the meeting to order, Comrade Kent was appointed to the chair. The Standing Orders Committee having been appointed, the Secretary read the Report of the Executive Committee as follows:—

"Unlike other organisations in this country claiming to be Socialist, and, therefore, democratic, we have not deemed it necessary to hold our meetings in secret and to exercise our discretion as to what translations should be made known to you, and what business concealed from you. It is our opinion that each and every member of our party is entitled to know what is going on inside the organisation. Under the political conditions now prevailing in Great Britain, and other countries governed by Parliaments, conspiracy is discarded as a revolutionary method, and the plea for secrecy is put forward only by organisations ignorant of political development, or whose leaders desire to hoodwink the rank and file.

Most of us have had experience of the political confidence trick in the Social-Democratic Federation and other organisations. Therefore your Executive Committee from the very beginning threw their meetings open to any member of the Party desiring to be present during the transaction of the business, and the opportunity was, we are pleased to state, freely availed of. Not a single one of our meetings was held that was not attended by non-members of the Executive Committee, and our discussions were, with permission, frequently participated in by them.

This fact would largely obviate the need for a report of our proceedings, but as for various reasons the bulk of our membership could not be present at our meetings, we will proceed to detail our work during the first three months of the existence of the party."

The Report then after giving details of the party membership and the attendances of the members of the Executive Committee, resumes:—

"We have to the best of our ability carried out the instructions you have given us. Mass meetings have been held in various parts of London with the twofold object of heralding the advent of the party and collecting funds for the extension of our propaganda, and in both respects we have had a record success. A lecture list has been organised which will well bear comparison with that of any political organisation holding propaganda meetings in the metropolis. The party has at its disposal over 15 speakers whose vigorous and sustained outdoor work has enabled us to hold over 20 meetings each Sunday and many others on week-days. Altogether about 300 propaganda meetings have been held since the inception of the party.

The lack of suitable literature soon made itself manifest, and the want of this most powerful instrument of propaganda has to a large extent negated the good effect of our speakers' addresses. When the party was forced into existence, we found ourselves without any literature of our own, and an examination of the literature published by other organisations did not reveal very encouraging results. We did not, however, believe that bad literature was better than none, and decided to ask the branches to be careful of the literature they handled and recommended them for the time being to confine themselves to the list furnished them by this committee.

Many otherwise suitable pamphlets—among them several published in America—had to be discarded owing to the presence of objectionable advertisements, and even in the selected list some were found to which the same objection was raised. The question of the publication by the party of pamphlets explanatory of our position has engaged our attention, but pressure of business at the Centre and lack of the

necessary funds have prevented us from taking more active steps in this direction.

To facilitate the branches in procuring supplies of all suitable literature, we have established a Literature Agency, which has been largely availed of. The development and extension of the agency will be greatly aided when adequate accommodation for this department is provided by the acquisition of party premises. For the building up of a library of Socialist propagandist literature, time and money are required, and when sufficient of the one has gone by and the other come in, we have no doubt the party will fully equip itself in this respect.

At the inaugural meeting you instructed us to open a fund for the establishment of a party organ and the first number appeared on the 3rd inst.

Owing to the whole-hearted manner in which the branches have taken up the prospect of the party organ, a sale of two-thirds of the total issue each month is guaranteed, and the really splendid response made by the members to our call for funds to start and maintain THE SOCIALIST STANDARD has placed our paper on a sound financial basis.

Deeming it advisable that the party should be represented at the International Congress, we decided to ask our comrade John Kent to proceed to Amsterdam. Comrade Alexander Pearson was also furnished with credentials. Our delegates were seated and The Socialist Party of Great Britain was duly recognised by the International Congress.

The report of the party delegates to the Congress has already appeared in THE SOCIALIST STANDARD and you will be asked to discuss it at this meeting.

The question of trades unionism and the attitude of our party thereto has been the subject matter of two meetings of the party. The discussions which have taken place at these meetings have been of an extremely interesting and highly educational character, and an incalculable amount of good is bound to follow from the free and frank expression of opinions on a subject which is at present engaging the attention of the workers, particularly of this country.

We venture to assert that never before in the history of the working-class movement in Britain has the question of trades unionism been so searchingly investigated from a scientific standpoint. We have no trade union leaders to conciliate, neither have we the desire to alienate the sympathies of any section of the working-class. The absence of vested interests in the maintaining of the *status quo* of unclass-consciousness economic organisations has enabled our party to examine the question in the light of science unhampered by any consideration other than the desire to find the truth, and as a result of the discussions which have taken place, we are able to lay before you a resolution, confident that your decision upon it will be the outcome of an earnest and honest desire to further the cause in which we are embarked.

We have discussed at some length the question of the training of speakers. We have also considered the question of the education of the members in general, in order that the party may be better fitted for the struggle for working class emancipation, and with this object in view have organised a Central Economic Class for the purpose of disseminating a knowledge of the scientific basis of Socialism.

The Peckham branch has placed at the disposal of the party their printing press, and this is already being utilised for the printing of propaganda leaflets.

Dealing with the progress of the party, we have to report the formation of 14 branches, viz., Battersea, Central, Clerkenwell, East London, Edmonton, Fulham, Islington, Paddington, Peckham, Southwark, Tooting, Watford, West Ham, Wood Green, and the increase of members has been considerable.

Our party is now firmly established in the metropolis, and its influence is being spread into the provinces where we have several members and hope soon to have more branches.

We claim that we have done all that could be accomplished in the circumstances and within the time. This has meant work for us. Not a single penny has been paid to any of our members for their services, but the consciousness of the inevitable triumph of our cause is sufficient

reward for any exertions we may have put forth, and the knowledge that in that triumph will fructify the aspirations and yearnings of the to-day silently suffering multitude of the disinherited, will, we are confident, stimulate everyone of our members towards greater efforts for the up-building of The Socialist Party of Great Britain."

This report having been accepted by the party, the questions of the Party Organ, Trades Unions, etc., were discussed at some considerable length, and the rules of the party were decided upon.

The following officers were appointed:

Treasurer—Alec J. M. Gray.

Executive Committee—Comrades E. Allen, T. Allen, A. Anderson, Crump, Elrick, Fairbrother, Fitzgerald, Hawkins, Hodson, Kent, Neumann, Woodhouse.

Auditors—Comrades Newlands and Neumann.

The meeting, after singing "The Internationale," broke up with hearty cheering for the Social Revolution and the triumph of Socialism.

VERAX.

Socialism and Labour Politics.

We reprint the following from the *Ilford Guardian*:—

SPEAKING under the auspices of the Romford Division of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, at the usual Monday evening open-air meeting held at the corner of Roden Street, Ilford Lane, Mr. John Kent said that there were many misconceptions with regard to Socialism, and with one of them, namely, that what were usually called "Labour Politics" were the politics of the Socialist Party, he wished to deal. The politics of Labour, as an expression, referred to the political views of the workmen organised into Trades Unions. They had, therefore, only to consider the various resolutions passed by and the attitude adopted at the Trade Union Congress of the previous week to recognise the very essential differences between them and the sound representatives of Socialism in this country—The Socialist Party of Great Britain. Let them take the views expressed by the Congress President, Mr. R. Bell, M.P., who was endeavouring to square the circle by taking the money of Organised Labour and at the same time doing the work of Organised Capital, by supporting Capitalist candidates and members of Parliament. In his opening address he had urged Labour to take a leaf out of the book of the brewers and the publicans, who, he declared, had held a loaded revolver at the head of the Government, with the threat that if the Government did not do as they wished, they would turn them out. Let Labour, said Mr. Bell, present a loaded revolver at the Government, and state that if those conditions which Labour considered fair and reasonable were not granted, then Labour would turn out the Government.

But, said Mr. Kent, let us carry this to its logical conclusion. If a Government, whether of the Tory or Liberal section of the master class, would give Labour these things, then Labour must keep that Government in office. And what were these things? They were mere unimportant (to the capitalist class) sops which Government could give without sacrificing anything of a fundamental character. Thus, the Congress, on the motion of Mr. W. Steadman, declared in favour of a pension of 5s. a week to workmen reaching the age of sixty. What was the use of this? How many workmen could work up to sixty? The Polytechnic Labour Bureau stated in its circulars that the employers rarely asked for men over 35 years of age.

But supposing a workman was unfortunate enough to live to be sixty, of what use was 5s. a week to him? The Socialist Party of Great Britain would not waste time upon such petty proposals. If the wealth producer was entitled, as they claimed he was, to anything at all, he had a right to full maintenance whenever he became unfit for work. But he would never secure his rights by appealing to the Capitalist Government. He must organise to take them for himself. The speaker dealt similarly with other resolutions passed at the Trade Union Congress, and declared in conclusion that the true interests of the people lay in allying themselves with the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

THE BOGEY OF THE TAXES.

A GREAT cry is being raised at the present time by two sections of the capitalist class about the question of taxation in relation to Import Duties. Mr. Chamberlain and his Conservative friends have suddenly discovered that a large amount of poverty, misery, and want of employment exists around us among the working-class. This is due, says this section, to the foreigner "dumping" his goods upon our markets, underselling the home producer, and thereby bringing about unemployment by preventing the home trader from disposing of his goods. The latter cannot retaliate upon the "foreigner's" market owing to the tariff wall erected around it to keep him out. At once the remedy comes to the front: Tax the foreigner's goods and keep them off our market, then the English manufacturer will be able to employ more "hands," and raise prices, to the benefit of the whole community.

But our Tory saviours shut their eyes to the state of Germany where Protection reigns, and where the nation has been passing through the worst trade depression it has ever known, with the concomitant evils of unemployment, want and misery for the working-class. If Protection be a remedy, how is it that it has failed in this case? Again, in America, which has just passed through a big "boom" of trade, the inevitable depression has set in and men are being discharged in thousands from the railways and other industries to tramp about in a vain search for employment and to consider the beauties of Protection and high prices.

Mr. Chamberlain also claims that if Protection were adopted, wages would rise. As he means wages reckoned in coin, his opponents point triumphantly to Germany and France, where wages, reckoned in the same way, are lower than in England; while he retorts by pointing to America, where the wages are higher. The one thing that this does prove is that wages are determined by some factor independent of fiscal policies or tax jugglings, and thereby places both sections of fiscal trumpet blowers out of court.

The Free Traders, largely Liberals, claim that the enormous increase of "our" trade and "our" business has been due to the abolition of the Corn Laws and the general policy of Free Trade. "Our" wealth has increased by leaps and bounds, and "our" prosperity is marvellous—so marvellous, in fact, that if Mr. Chamberlain's proposal to increase the tax on wheat is carried, the $\frac{1}{4}$ d. or $\frac{1}{2}$ d. increase in the retail price of the loaf of bread will cast the twelve or thirteen millions of people already on or below the poverty-line into the deepest depths of misery and wretchedness. It would not need a very elaborate calculation to estimate the date when, if "our" prosperity continues, the whole of the workers will be in the position of those before mentioned.

Therefore as they, the Free Traders, are the "real friends" of the working-class, they call upon that class to vote them into possession of the political machinery for the purpose of saving the workers from this dire evil that is about to be inflicted upon them. True, some cantankerous person may point out that this party is chiefly concerned in having cheap food, so that the cost of production of labour-power may, as a consequence, be cheap also; that following the abolition of the Corn Laws these humane manufacturers reduced wages in the textile industries by an average of about 14 per cent.; that they opposed the Factory Acts, which had been introduced to protect women and children, with all their power; that when returned to power in 1862 upon the well-known Newcastle program, while they sent soldiers to shoot down the miners of Featherstone and a gunboat to "pacify" the dockers at Hull, they quite forgot to pass measures such as Payment of Members, Triennial Parliaments, One Man One Vote, Payment of Election Expenses, which they had pledged themselves to make law. Another might draw attention to the fact that a large section of this party import raw material and use large quantities of flour, etc., in the manufacture of cotton and other textiles, and that they are

quite as much concerned in cheap wheat for this reason as for giving the worker a big loaf.

The serious-minded worker who does his own thinking will probably at first be amazed at the money, the energy and dexterity expended by both sections of the capitalist class, or its agents, in this campaign—all for the benefit of the working-class. He watches them handling figures and statistics in a way that must cause Cinquevalli to turn green with envy, each proving splendidly that the poverty and misery is bound to increase if the proposals of the other side are adopted! If, however, he turns from the assertions, contradictions, and general bewilderment that surrounds these howling Cheap Jacks, and examines the facts of the situation calmly, his amazement will disappear.

In any form of civilised society certain common expenses have to be met by the members of that society in one way or another, depending upon the conditions and form of that society. As the wealth of all communities can only be produced by applying human labour to the raw material provided by Nature, it follows that the working-class produces all the wealth in existence, no matter to what purpose it may be turned. But here a significant fact comes to light. While the working class dig the ore, construct the machines, build the mills and factories, lay the railways—in short, bring forth all the instruments and machinery necessary for the production and distribution of wealth, yet they own neither these instruments nor the wealth when it is produced. It does not matter in what direction or with what object any member of the working class wishes to apply his energies in the production of wealth, he will find a barrier to that application in the fact that some individual or individuals belonging to another class own and control the raw material and the machinery necessary to convert it, and who will only permit the worker to operate these instruments upon the condition that the wealth produced is left in the capitalist's possession to dispose of as he pleases.

Of course, it will be easily understood that if there were no working class to exploit, the capitalist class would have to work to keep itself, and they are therefore bound to return to the workers sufficient of the wealth they have produced to keep them in a state of working efficiency and to reproduce their kind.

The capitalists may differ among themselves as to the exact point at which this standard may be fixed, but they are unanimous in fighting to retain for themselves all above this limit. The workers, on the other hand, are always struggling to increase their share of the wealth produced, with varying degrees of success, which results in individual or sectional wages varying, but makes the return to the class as a whole a close approximation to the cost of living under the conditions obtaining in that society. It thus becomes evident that the taxes must be paid out of the surplus wealth extracted from the workers by the capitalists; this explains not only the latter's interest in the question of taxation, but also why it is of small moment to the worker.

"But," says the Free Trader, "all taxes fall upon the consumer, and therefore the workman will have to pay increased prices for the articles he purchases if a tax is placed upon them." The obvious retort is that as the working class are the only producers, but not the only consumers, it is from the former point of view that they should look at the matter. But apart from this, the statement is not true of itself. Prices are determined primarily by the cost of production, and immediately by supply and demand. The variations in the latter cause prices to fluctuate, but the point above and below which they move, and tend to come to rest, is the value of the article—or, technically, all commodities exchange upon the average at their value. If owing to circumstances a commodity were being sold above its value, fresh capital would soon be turned in that direction, and competition and extra supply would cause prices to fall. If being sold below its value, part of the capital would be withdrawn, and the diminished supply, other things remaining constant, would cause prices to rise to the normal level.

Whatever may be the conditions at any given time, the capitalist always sells at the

highest price the market will bear at that period. Articles that are easily produced are often taxed without affecting the retail price at all, as shown in the taxes on tea, beer, and spirits, while in the case of tobacco one grade is sold retail at a price almost equalling the tax imposed! When the 1s. duty was laid on corn the price of bread rose in a few districts, but in the majority of cases it remained stationary, and when the duty was removed the wholesale price of corn rose! House rent offers another good example. Often when the landlord raises the rent he makes the excuse that the rates have gone up, but he never offers to lower them when rates go down, showing thereby that it is only an excuse, and that while competition for houses continues rents will rise. When the Central London Railway was opened the competition for houses in Shepherd's Bush increased largely, and as a consequence rents rose as much as 3s. in the £. This was the limit offered for the time being, and when shortly after rates were raised by a good sum, the rents remained unaltered. At West Ham, which is the most heavily rated district in England, rents are falling, while rates are rising, owing to the decreased demand for houses. These illustrations show how little the question of rates affects the workers who pay rent.

This is still more true regarding so-called monopolies whose productions are sold at the highest price obtainable consistent with the carrying on of business, and even if they were taxed up to the point of absorbing profits, other things remaining constant, the business might close, but obviously prices could not be raised. An instance from Australia may be cited. The Standard Oil Company have a practical monopoly of the petroleum oil entering that continent, and until a short time ago a duty of 3d. per gallon was levied upon it. The company charged 6d. per gallon to the retailers, who paid the tax and sold the oil at 11d. per gallon. An agitation was set on foot to have this tax taken off "the poor man's oil," which after some perseverance was effected.

On the same day that the duty was abolished Rockefeller raised the price to the retailers to 9d. a gallon, who sold it to the consumers at the same price as before—in other words, Rockefeller was relieved from paying the tax that until then he had paid upon his product entering the country, and the working class were in exactly the same position as before. In London the abolition of the coal dues levied by the City authorities did not alter the retail price one farthing.

It is thus easily seen that if the whole of the taxes were abolished it would not benefit the working class unless competition among the capitalists drove prices down in proportion, and then others would benefit as well, while the workers would have to resist a reduction of wages.

The question thus becomes reduced to one of a quarrel between the big and the little thieves as to the apportionment of the cost of maintaining the present system, and is expressed chiefly by the small middle-class forming various tax-reform parties with the object of curtailing the powers of the monopolists and big capitalists. Being only really concerned with the problem of how to stop the robbery under which they suffer, the workers should take no stock of the quarrel over the paying of the expenses of the burglary. Whether he is living in a country whose fiscal policy is based on Free Trade or in one in which it is based upon Protection; whether the country is highly taxed or otherwise; whether the district he lives in is highly rated or the reverse, makes little difference; the worker finds that whatever of the above conditions he may be under, a subsistence is all that upon an average he obtains.

Firmly gripping the above sound and logical position, The Socialist Party, the only party truly representing the workers, makes its attack upon the central pivotal position—to capture the political machinery and therewith control of economic powers and social forces—taxation and the armed forces of the nation, for the purpose of ending the robbery by overthrowing the system of Capitalism, emancipating the working class, and laying the foundations of the Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth.

J. FITZGERALD.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

ALL communications for insertion to be addressed to the Editorial Committee, 5, Arvon Road, High-bury, N., and to be authenticated by name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. Though we cannot undertake, owing to our limited space, to publish all we may receive, everything sent in will receive careful consideration.

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Orders for Subscriptions, Copies of the Paper, and Special Advertisements should be sent to C. Lehane, Sec., the S. P. of G. B., Communist Club, 107, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, London, W.C., who will also receive payment for same.

The Socialist Standard,

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1904.

EDITORIAL.**The Futility of Reform.**

THE Socialist Party of Great Britain has often been asked why they have not drawn up a programme of measures for the partial redress of those evils which most immediately affect the position of the working class. "Should we not strive to palliate the existing misery?" "Should we not seek to foster the sectional differences existing among the capitalists so that we may use them in the interests of the working class?" "Should we not temporarily support, or form temporary alliances with, other political parties while working for common ends?" These and other questions of like import are constantly being put to us by non-members of our party. We now propose to answer them.

The basis of modern society is, economically, the holding by one section of the community of the means necessary for producing and distributing the means of living of the whole of the community, *i.e.*, the ownership by a class of the whole wealth of society. As against them there is the vast mass of the people owning nothing but their "labour-power," their power of working.

The worker being compelled to sell this power of working on the labour market, in return for his means of livelihood, has interests diametrically opposed to those of the employer who buys his activity. Hence two classes with conflicting interests, constantly meeting on the labour market, must necessarily engage in a struggle in which each combatant can gain only at the expense of the other. Such a struggle between classes forms a class war.

Economically, the working class are impotent so long as the employing class has possession of political power. Therefore, the class struggle must manifest itself as a political struggle for class supremacy. The working class can only gain their ends by taking possession of the political machine and using it so as to gain their own economic emancipation. This can be done only by themselves, and the struggle in which they must take part to secure this is a class war—the working class against the employing class.

The basis of a Socialist Party in any country must, therefore, be a recognition of the fact that the material interests of the working class are in entire opposition to those of the employing class, that is, the recognition of the class

war. Any party which declares that no class war exists rules itself, by virtue of that declaration, out of court as a Socialist party. It is, necessary, therefore, in forming and organising a Socialist party to have a clearly defined class war basis, and in every action of the party to always keep the class-conscious character of the party clearly to the front. Any action tending to obscure this position, any position keeping the class struggle in the background, is a virtual betrayal of Socialist principles, serving only to confuse the issues in the minds of the workers and to make it more difficult for them to understand their class position and the reasons for it, and to see the road which must be followed if they are to achieve their emancipation—serving only, in brief, to retard the development of their class consciousness.

Any alliance, either permanent or temporary, with a party which does not recognise the class war is therefore out of the question. For does not every such alliance, whether openly avowed or tacitly understood, make less clear the class opposition which exists between the various political parties? How can we claim to be essentially distinct and, in fact, diametrically opposed to all other political parties, if we can find sufficient common objects to make possible any common ground of working? We think that the teaching of our principles is hindered by every such concession to the anti-class war parties, and is, therefore, opposed to the true interests of Socialism. We, therefore, avow ourselves in hostility to all other political parties, and can have nothing in common with them.

And this has been the experience of the Socialist parties of other countries. Wherever those parties have maintained an attitude of open hostility to all other political parties they are strongly organised. Whenever any of those parties, strong or weak, have formed temporary alliances, as they did, for instance, in Belgium, with the Liberal Party, for the purpose of securing universal suffrage, they lost strength, and remain as far from securing their desired reform as ever they were. This, then, is our first objection that such action confuses the issues and hinders our success.

Our next objection lies in the fact that any such dependence upon other political parties for their assistance assumes the maintenance of a majority of members on our legislative bodies who are not class conscious representatives of the working class. So long as that remains the case, so long will the legislature be controlled by middle class men, by capitalists. Every such capitalistically controlled legislature secures the control of the administrative and judicial functions by the capitalists.

The result of this is that every measure carried through Parliament is carried through by those whose position makes it necessary that these enactments should be piecemeal and ineffective. They will, therefore, endeavour to reduce every concession to the point of impotency except in cases where they think to maintain their power by greater concessions. In this latter case they know they can depend upon their second line of defence—the administration of those laws which will cause the laws to remain a dead letter.

We have only to study the legislation of the last half of the nineteenth century to find that each of those phases of the economic legislation of the middle class parties plentifully exist. We find that the administration of the law being in the hands of the capitalist class, will be carried on by them in such a way as not to be dangerous to their own class interests.

Any "blue-book" dealing with any phase of working class life, will show instances innumerable of the neglect of the Local Government Board, or of the Borough Councils, or of the County Councils, in applying the laws already in existence. Housing Acts and Public Health Acts and Acts for the prevention of women returning to work at too early a period after child-birth, and Factory and Workshop Acts are not efficiently carried out, while powers vested in governing bodies are hardly ever exercised. Thus we read with regard to the pollution of the atmosphere by smoke, that:

"There are people in Manchester who systematically pollute the air and pay the fine, finding it much cheaper to do so than to

put up new plant. The trial of such cases before benches of magistrates composed of manufacturers, or their friends, creates an atmosphere of sympathy for the accused, and it was alleged that magistrates who had sought to give effect to the law encountered the indifference and sometimes the positive opposition of their colleagues."

Just so! And this is only one case which may be cited from among innumerable others which lie before us.

We have to point out further that sometimes it happens that a reform asked for by the working class can be granted them without any serious danger to the capitalist class. In such cases they make graceful concessions and the working class are usually called upon to hail the party granting such a "concession" as their truest friends.

Another case is that sometimes a measure is passed which, while benefiting certain individual workers, proves disastrous to another and larger section. Such was, for example, the Workman's Compensation Act. This Act was passed to benefit those workers in certain selected industries who met with accidents while in the performance of their duties. It is to be observed that the Act was again the minimum of possible concession. It benefited those workers who in consequence of meeting with accidents which disabled them, received compensation where, before the passing of the Act, they would have obtained nothing. But while they were benefited, a larger section of the working class were affected to their detriment. The employing class ever on the watch where their class interests are concerned, immediately claimed that the old men they employed, the men over a certain age, who were rendered infirm by the hard toil to which they had been subjected, were liable to more accidents than men in their earlier manhood, and that when they met with accidents, such accidents were more likely to prove serious or fatal than if they were younger. These men were in consequence immediately discharged. And what has happened since? A committee, on which was Mr. George N. Barnes, of the A.S.E., has reported:

"That with reference to the employment of aged, infirm, or maimed persons, amendments should be made to enable the employer to offer work to such persons without incurring undue risk of paying compensation."

We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that the trying to secure measures for the palliation of the evils of the existing class-governed society is useless. The men in control of the legislative, administrative, and judicial machinery of the community can always dodge any such partial attacks upon their position, can always find loopholes to escape from any concession appearing to endanger their position.

The only thing which will secure the alleviation of our misery and our wage slavery is the propagation of the principles of Socialism and the building up of a class conscious Socialist party, prepared to wrest at the earliest possible moment the whole powers of government from the hands of those who at present control them.

When a strong Socialist party, fighting directly for the establishment of a Socialist regime, and prepared in their progress to secure any advantage which will act as a new vantage ground in their further fight is organised, then the capitalists will be only too ready to offer and to give each and all of those palliatives as a sop to the growing Socialist forces in the country.

We have, therefore, to recognise all the time that it is only possible to secure any real benefit for the people when the people themselves become class conscious, when behind the Socialists in Parliament and on other bodies there stands a solid phalanx of men clear in their knowledge of Socialism and clear in their knowledge that the only way to secure the Socialist Commonwealth of the future is to depend only upon the efforts of themselves and those who have the same class conscious opinions. Therefore we have no palliative programme. The only palliative we shall ever secure is the Socialist Society of the future gained by fighting uncompromisingly at all times and in every season.

A Look Round.

CHAMBERLAIN has evidently undermined the economic basis of the Shoreditch Branch of the S.D.F. The members have resolved:

"That, being cognisant of the great distress amongst our fellow-workers in London, owing to the inevitable depression in trade, we call upon the L.C.C. to have the building of the steamboats for the Thames traffic carried out as far as possible on the Thames, thereby alleviating to some extent the suffering of the workers of this great metropolis."

* * *

This contribution towards the solution of the unemployed problem will, doubtless, receive due consideration from the L.C.C. and the Tariff Reform League. For an alleged Socialist organisation to advocate Preferential Treatment or Protection in this manner, and to suggest dealing with the "inevitable" unemployed problem in one locality by creating or intensifying it in another, qualifies it for membership of the Capitalists' Kidders' Conglomeration. We shall watch to see whether they join the Chamberlain or General Booth faction.

* * *

The *Clarion* and *Labour Leader* are concerned at the position of W. C. Steadman, an adopted candidate of the L.R.C., whom the *Daily News* announces as the Liberal candidate for Finsbury, which he certainly is, and who is reported to have urged the workers of Stepney to strike a blow at the Government by returning the Liberal candidate. But when has Steadman been anything but a decoy duck for the Liberal faction of the master class? Twelve months ago the *Tribune* (West Ham) contained a letter which had been sent to W. Thorne's Election Committee, part of which read as follows:—

"If members of the S.D.F. accept the aid of W. C. Steadman, who runs as a Liberal Labour candidate, then I consider they are morally bound to support Steadman's candidature if asked to do so. No class conscious Socialist could do so, as only so recently as last September he was the chief speaker at a Liberal demonstration at Grays, at which he is reported to have urged the audience to return a Liberal member at the next election. Socialists cannot logically support candidates who ally themselves with any section of the Capitalist Party, and, therefore, cannot honestly accept aid from them for Socialist candidates."

What do the *Labour Leader* and the *Clarion* expect? "Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin?"

* * *

According to the *Daily Express*, it is an unpleasant and appalling fact that lunacy is steadily increasing in England and Wales, and it is startling to find that whereas one person in every 327 was certified as insane in 1894, the figures for 1904 are one in 288. But to the Socialist there is nothing startling in the fact. As the struggle for existence becomes more intense, as we speed up, as the raging, tearing, hurrying and scurrying possess us, and as the position of the worker becomes more precarious, we must expect that the mental equilibrium will be disturbed. The returns show that the numbers of insane known to the Commissioners have for some time past been increasing at a greater rate than the growth of population. While the rate of increase in the population during the last decade was 12.2 per cent., the rate of increase of the insane was 24.4 per cent.

* * *

Those fanatical teetotallers who declare that it is only necessary to close public-houses in order to empty our lunatic asylums, should ponder over the fact that the Commissioners certify that alcoholic intemperance is responsible for not more than 22.8 per cent. of insane males and 9.5 per cent. of insane females. We

have no desire to minimise the effect of these figures, but it must not be forgotten that in many cases where intemperance is certified as a cause, it is itself an effect of the overcrowding, insanitary, ill-ventilated, and generally unhealthy conditions under which the workers work and exist. Dr. David Walsh, in his paper on "Unwholesome Workshops and Drink," declared that anything which weakened the health of the individual predisposed him to the use of alcohol, and no sensible person will dispute this. There is only one way by which the health of the people can be secured and maintained, and that is by the reorganisation of Society upon the basis laid down by the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

* * *

As Mr. Featherstone Asquith is now denying that he was responsible for the shooting of the miners, it will be useful for our propagandists to note the following reference to the matter which he made in his speech at Glasgow on the 17th October, 1893:

"The year that had gone by had been distinguished by a large number of deplorable industrial disputes. Those disputes had culminated in what had been a most serious and regrettable conflict—he alluded to the dispute between the coalmasters and colliers in the Midland parts of England. In his character as Secretary of State for the Home Department, it had been his duty to take executive action in more than one of those cases for the maintenance of the law and for the prevention of disorder, and he accepted the full responsibility for everything that had been done."

* * *

Asquith is a Liberal. So also are Bell, Crooks, Henderson, Shackleton, Steadman, and others receiving the support of the L.R.C. The I.L.P. openly supports the L.R.C., but the S.D.F. does not affiliate to it nationally, although it permits its prominent members to attend the Conferences and be adopted as L.R.C. candidates. W. Thorne has not yet been called upon to resign his membership of the S.D.F. for having decided to run as a "Labour" candidate, although for the same backing-down A. E. Holmes was requested to send in his resignation. Moreover, since Thorne has fallen into line with the L.R.C., conditions, he has been publicly supported by Quelch, Jones, Hayday, and other well-known members of the S.D.F., at a demonstration at which he declared that:

"he believed the eight hours day was the most important of all questions."

For of such is the S.D.F.! Quelch and his friends support Thorne; he supports Alden, Crooks, Steadman, and Co.; Alden, Steadman, and Co. support Asquith and Co.; and E. Belfort Bax writes letters, which are published in the Press, from the National Liberal Club! No wonder we are asked by a correspondent whether the S.D.F. still assert that there is no difference between Liberals and Tories, and whether we can explain what they mean by their continual references to "keeping free from entangling alliances?" We cannot: we give it up.

* * *

At the annual conference of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association held last month at Bournemouth, the President in his opening address, said that the Public Health Acts could not be administered in many places owing to the fact that the officers held their appointments from year to year, and were in consequence dependent upon the goodwill of individual members of the authority appointing them. What member of the association of some years' experience had not been covertly or openly threatened by some member or members of his authority, or by those aspiring to the office, for either attacking his insanitary property, seizing his unsound—or sampling his adulterated—food? Quite so, and so long as the governing institutions are controlled by the capitalist class, the legislation and administration will be in the interest of that class. And mere Labourism will not alter it. Many a "Labour" member makes the best possible supporter and defender of Capitalism and its works.

The capitalist press is filled with articles concerning the out-of-works, the homeless, free meals, and other pastimes to which the capitalist class devotes its attention when other things pall. There is no question about things being terribly bad, and that they have not yet touched bottom. In the business world there is a general complaint of slackness of trade and tightness of money—the latter being perennial with the wage-worker. Speaking for the Church Army last month, Mr. Colin F. Campbell told a *Daily Telegraph* representative that he shared the general opinion that the approaching winter was likely to be one of very great severity for the poorest of the poor. During the summer months their Labour Homes had been without exception full, and he had never known that to be the case during the 12 years he had been there. There were more of the better class of people asking help than there had ever been. Canon Scott Holland, preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral on September 11th, gave the following word-picture of London to-day:

"Look at London to-day! Sum up its story!

It's poverty! It's nakedness! It's suffering! There it all welters! Can we not go closer down into it? Can we not fling into it our reason, our imagination, our conscience—so that we actually see what the unhappy see, and feel what the wronged feel, and burn with their indignation, and pray with their prayers? This is not done—not done even so much as it was done. There is a slackening of social interest—a deadening of social reform. People do not care as they did. There is no movement. Everything that we hoped for is caught in some dismal backwater. Yet the poor babies still die in their hundreds, simply through the murderous infamy of the conditions into which they are born. And the sweated women still toil from morning to night for a starvation wage, as literally, as intolerably, as ever! And the aged poor are more than ever left behind out of the marching hosts. And the weak invalids are still squeezed down to the level of the criminals and the loafers. We should never let such things be if we really identified ourselves with those who suffer under them—if we took their sorrows as our sorrow—if we were made one with their need."

Such is the picture, not overdrawn in the slightest detail. Cynics will note that it has been drawn in the chief institution of the Christian Church, that class organisation which has so ably assisted the capitalists in their efforts to keep the people down. And what is said here of London can be said of every large and wealthy city throughout the world. It is Hell! After two thousand years of Christianity, after centuries of middle-class domination, after years of Tory and Liberal Government, London is Hell! And no matter where we turn, one problem forces itself upon us and demands solution. In Monarchic Britain, in Kaiser-inflicted Germany, in Republican France, in Free America, in Despotism Russia, it is Hell for the proletariat. The problem of world-wide poverty in the midst of plenty will never be solved by sermons, prayers, Labour Homes, or Labour Leaders. It will only be solved when the people assume the ownership and control of the means of life, and produce for their own use instead of for idlers. To prepare the proletariat for this complete revolution is the mission of The Socialist Party of Great Britain.—K.

A New York cable states: "A law which comes into operation to-day (Sept. 1st, 1904), makes it bribery for an employer to pay money to a labour leader to avert a strike. Hitherto blackmail of this kind has been exceedingly common."

LITERATURE AGENCY.

Branches and members should purchase their literature through the Party Agent, F. C. Watts, 154, Ashmore Road, Paddington, London, W. Write for particulars as to terms, etc.

CENTRAL ECONOMIC CLASS.

The class meets weekly and is free to all. On application to J. Fitzgerald, 34, Wilmington Square, London, W., full particulars will be sent.

"Fire Out the Fools."

SOME years ago, when it was thought by many Socialists that West Ham was about to become in England what Roubaix was then in France—a town whose municipal government was to be controlled by Socialists—it was not anticipated, save by the clearest sighted amongst us, that the tactics then adopted, were to prove so disastrous as they have done to the propagation of our principles?

At that time the branches of the I.L.P. and S.D.F. were strong in numbers and full of enthusiasm. But in order to snatch a political victory it was decided to form a Socialist-Labor party, to be called the Labour Group, and to include so-called Labour members and Radicals who were in sympathy with the "aims of Labour." This move was apparently successful in so far as it gave the Socialist Labour Party a majority on the Town Council, and was successful as long as nothing was attempted with which the non-Socialist section of the party could not agree, but immediately a move was made in a Collectivist direction it was found that the non-Socialists could not be relied on. The consequence was practically the failure of the party to make more than a halting step or so, and very small steps at that, toward the Socialist goal.

This is ancient history for the older men in the movement, but it is worth repeating in order to emphasise what follows, and to prevent a possible repetition of a similar mistake in any other town or district where we may be making headway.

It is now admitted that this was an error of judgment, but it was a mistake that should not have been made if the S.D.F. and I.L.P. members had had a clear understanding of Socialist policy. "He that is not with us is against us," whether he be avowedly Capitalist or alleged Labour. I say, one such mistake in tactics on the part of any local body of Socialists may be forgiven, but a repetition of the error is a crime against the movement. And this is what we are faced with to-day in West Ham. There is the same aspiration abroad now as there was then. The aspiration is, perhaps, not yet avowed, but it is expressed in action. The local S.D.F. Councillors, who lead the remainder of the members, are anxious once again to form a composite Socialist-Labor nondescript party, which they hope will be strong enough to form a majority of the Council. These men are supporting Alderman White, a Liberal Passive-Resister, who is a candidate at the forthcoming municipal elections, because, forsooth, "he is in sympathy with Labour."

The result of the first mistake was a great set back to Socialist propaganda in West Ham. A second such error would have disastrous effects were it not for the existence of a branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, who will keep the position clearly before the people, and publicly expose those who would mislead them. Such tactics undoubtedly cause confusion in the minds of the workers. They are not all heaven born politicians and wirepullers like the S.D.F. members of the West Ham Town Council.

Mr. Will Thorne, of the S.D.F., who was to have been the Socialist Parliamentary candidate for South West Ham at the next General Election, is now, we are informed, to run as the Labour candidate under the auspices of the Labour Representation Committee. Not that this makes much difference, for Thorne already had his hands firmly tied by his pledges to his union, the Catholics, and the Passive Resisters. So even if he understood what Socialism means—which he never did—and was elected—which is not probable—he would be so firmly bound by his pledges that he would not be able to act as an exponent of Socialism in the House. Our S.D.F. friends have not yet even learned that elementary political lesson for Socialists, viz., to keep free from entangling alliances.

One of the things which Socialists have so fiercely criticised and held up to public scorn,

TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

The extraordinary lack of apprehension by the superficially "educated" middle-class mind, even of a woman of genius in her own limited sphere, as compared with the depth of insight and forcible characterisation of a great scientific thinker informed by and applying the materialist philosophy is strikingly instanced by the following extracts:—

SARAH BERNHARDT, according to the "Strand Magazine" for August, when contrasting her first impression of fashionable life in London with life in Paris, says:

"The carriage road between the riding track and the foot passengers was filled with dogcarts, open carriages of various kinds, mail coaches, and very smart cabs. There were powdered footmen, horses decorated with flowers, sportsmen driving, ladies, too, driving admirable horses. All this elegance, this essence of luxury and this joy of life, brought back to my memory the vision of our Bois du Boulogne, so elegant and so animated a few years before, when Napoleon III. used to drive through in his carriage, nonchalant and smiling. Ah! how beautiful it was in those days—our Bois de Boulogne, with the officers caracoling in the Avenue des Acacias, admired by our beautiful society women!

"The joy of Life was everywhere—the love of Love enveloping Life with infinite charm. I closed my eyes, and I felt a pang at my heart as the awful recollections of 1870 crowded to my brain. He was dead—our gentle Emperor with his shrewd smile; dead, vanquished by the sword, betrayed by Fortune, crushed with grief."

Karl Marx exposes the real Bonaparte (this "gentle Emperor") in the following characteristic and forcible passage in his work, "The Eighteenth Brumaire" (see p. 41):

"Along with ruined *roués* of questionable means of support and questionable antecedents, along with the foul and adventure-seeking dregs of the *bourgeoisie*, there were vagabonds, dismissed soldiers, discharged convicts, runaway galley slaves, sharpers, jugglers, lazzaroni, pickpockets, sleight-of-hand performers, gamblers, procurers, keepers of disorderly houses, porters, *littérateurs*, organ-grinders, rag-pickers, scissors grinders, tinkers, beggars—in short, that whole undefined, dissolute, kicked-about mass that the Frenchmen style "*la Bohème*." With this kindred element, Bonaparte formed the stock of the "Society of December 10," a "benevolent association," in so far as, like Bonaparte himself, all its members felt the need of being benevolent to themselves at the expense of the toiling nation. The Bonaparte, who here constitutes himself *Chief of the Slum-Proletariat*; who only here finds again in plenteous form the interests which he personally pursues; who, in this refuse, offal and wreck of all classes, recognises the only class upon which he can depend unconditionally—this is the real Bonaparte, the Bonaparte without qualification."

is the corruption which so often obtains on our public bodies, and notoriously so in West Ham. It is reported that a Local Government Board auditor stated that the West Ham Board of Guardians was the most corrupt board in the country. This, to those who know a little of these local governing bodies, may seem to be a rather "large order." But I think he was not very far from the mark. Whether that is so or not, it is absolutely necessary that Socialist representatives (they are not yet delegates, unfortunately) should keep their hands clean and be above suspicion. If not, how can they criticise and expose their opponents?

Now, the present "Socialist" representatives—with two notable exceptions—are not above reproach. Apart from accepting presents from contractors—which no Socialist should ever do—whether it influences his vote when tenders are before the Board or not, they have been parties to what is not at all an uncommon occurrence on this Board, namely, working their relatives into jobs or positions under the Board. They may say that a certain well-known, so-called Labour member has done this, and in so doing they are only following his lead. But our representatives are not on these administrative bodies to follow. They are there to initiate, and most certainly not to follow a lead of this kind. Nor are they there to hob-nob with officials, and to eat and drink at their expense. The excuse that other members do so is no excuse for Socialists, but—and the attention of the public should be drawn to this—it will explain why it is that the members are unable to deal with the officials in a suitable manner when any dereliction of duty takes place—and such cases are not uncommon—and why it is that the officials of the West Ham Board are the masters of the members instead of the members of the Board being the masters of the officials.

The result in West Ham of this political intriguing and these corrupt practices—though perhaps, not legally corrupt, they are from a Socialist point of view—has been to put back the clock for years, and although I am sure that a warning to keep clear of both these practices is unnecessary to members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, this article will have served a useful purpose if it opens the eyes of the members of the so-called Socialist organisations and the public to what to an unbiassed observer appears to be trickery, which is not even successful trickery, and practices that cannot be condoned.

H.G.H.

Correspondence.

(TO THE EDITORS.)

Dear Comrades,—The *Saturday Review* discussing the Amsterdam Congress and the relative merits of Bebel and Jaures, observes, amidst many other funny observations, that—

"The Socialism of the Fabians is the Socialism of Jaures, which is different from that of Keir Hardie who will not have anything to do with either Liberal or Tory." And, again, "Jaures ought to have nothing to do with the Congress, he is too clever and level-headed to keep company with the men who carried that resolution." (*Re India*.)

It may interest the *Saturday Review* scribe to learn that Keir Hardie as President of the British Section, voted with Jaures as against Bebel, on the "Dresden Resolution," and that the Resolution on "India," moved by S. G. Hobson (I.L.P.) and seconded by Dabbar Naroaji (the Liberal candidate for North Lambeth) was carried amid the acclamation of Jaures and his party—The Parti Socialiste Français.

Truly, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing."—Yours fraternally,

ALEX PEARSON.

Gravesend, Sept. 9, 1904.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H. KENNETT (Ilford).—As we have no men of college education among our contributors, we cannot see why a college education should be necessary in order to understand what we write. Having something to say, we say it as clearly as we can. We assume that our readers possess a certain portion of cerebral tissue, and therefore do not undertake to provide them with powers of understanding.

H. KESTRAIL.—Thanks for suggestions, one of which you will observe has been adopted in this issue. The other matter is being considered.

S.W.T.L. (Peckham).—We have an article in hand dealing with the subject of your query. Clamour for what you want and you will get it when space and other things permit.

B. M. JONES.—Certainly not. The object of our journal is to expound the principles of Socialism. If you have any suggestions to offer which might enable us the better to carry out that object, by all means send them along. What you suggest is not Socialism.

J. SAMUELS (Stratford).—This is the inevitable outcome of supporting fakirs of any kind. We are watching the situation with interest, and shall act in the true interests of Social-Democracy. We refer you to our Branch Directory for the information you require.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

OBJECT.

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS—

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master-class, and the consequent enslavement of the working-class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working-class from the domination of the master-class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working-class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working-class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist-class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working-class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working-class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master-class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working-class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

FROM OUR BRANCHES.

Reports from Branches for insertion under this heading MUST be in BEFORE the 20th of each month, otherwise they cannot appear.

BATTERSEA.

Sick and weary of the conflicting tactics and vacillating policy of the S.D.F., the members of this branch, some of them veterans in the Socialist movement, were among the first to come forward and raise the red flag from the mire through which it was being dragged, and are proud of having assisted in the formation of The Socialist Party of Great Britain, which now so worthily bears that flag aloft. To combat the confusing effects of the compromise and opportunism of the S.D.F. as well as the influence of that local Tammany Hall-like organisation of the "Statesman of Labour" and his "heelers," we have all through the summer conducted a vigorous campaign, holding three propaganda meetings every Sunday, besides the usual week night meetings. As a result we are able to report a gratifying increase in membership. In addition we have an Economic Class, meeting

on Thursdays, and a History Class, meeting on Fridays, both commencing at 8 p.m., to which all members of the party are heartily invited. The only condition of membership is regular attendance.

We of the Battersea branch fully realise that all our time and energies are required for the work of educating the workers to a clear conception of the causes of their misery, and of organising them so that they will concentrate all their efforts upon the capture of the political machine which is held and used by the master class as an instrument of oppression and exploitation. We have no time, therefore, to waste in appeals to the capitalist class for measures of reform, because we know that nothing short of complete economic freedom, and nothing short of the overthrow of capitalism, will put an end to the system under which the robbery and oppression of the worker goes on.

No, comrades, what we want the oppressor will never give. The workers themselves must achieve their emancipation. "He who would be free must himself strike the blow." It is our part to show the worker how the blow must be struck.

We echo the cry of our comrade Lehane. The watchword is Onward! to the Socialist Republic. —THE MAN WITH THE RED FLAG.

EAST LONDON.

This branch is not very large in numbers, but we try to make up by energy what we lack in that respect. The district we are working in, perhaps, the most poverty-stricken in the metropolis, and should by a lot of hard work and well organised, offer good ground to spread the seed of Socialism and build up a strong branch of The Socialist Party.

The far eastern portion, viz., Poplar, Bromley, Stepney, is the hot-bed of the alleged Labour leader, who, so far as possible, does everything to confuse the minds of the working class as to their correct position, and as a consequence the working class are apathetic and indifferent regarding their social welfare.

The work of this branch is to give a clear exposition of the conflict of interests between the working class and the master class, which in this district is made most intensely manifest, to arouse that enthusiasm which arises from class consciousness, and to organise the workers into The Socialist Party determined to wage war against Capitalism and all its supporters, with the ultimate object of securing its complete overthrow.—W.W.

EDMONTON.

ONE of our most successful meetings was held on Sept. 4, addressed by Comrade Lehane. I mention it particularly because at that meeting we introduced THE SOCIALIST STANDARD and sold it in large numbers, because the current issue of *Justice* had a reference to us in which the comic element strove in vain to outdo the false, but which our comrade, a comparative stranger to the local circumstances, was easily able to thoroughly discredit; and also because as a result of the foregoing, the meeting was made the occasion of those silly S.D.F. attacks we had hoped were things of the past. We realise that for some time to come considerable clearing away of misconceptions will be necessary before the Socialist party shall reap the full reward of its labour.—A. ANDERSON.

FULHAM.

DESPITE the fact that we have had to open up a station for our open-air work, our propaganda meetings have been well attended; the number of THE SOCIALIST STANDARD we have been able to dispose of being very good, considering the disadvantages under which we have laboured. Judged by the character of the questions we are called upon to answer, especially in regard to alleged labour and semi-Socialist bodies, our work is beginning to tell, and there is every possibility of our numerical strength, small though it is at present, being considerably augmented in the near future. If all good Socialists, attached or unattached, would but appreciate the importance of being associated with an organisation such as ours, based as it is upon sound principles, and pursuing as it does a straight and clearly defined policy, how much more effectively would we be able to accomplish the work we are called upon to do in this district! However, we have made a commencement, and are on the way to overtake, perhaps to beat even, the Islington record.

We are endeavouring to have a series of meetings at Fulham Cross on Thursday evenings at 8.30, and if any speaker happens along that way we shall be pleased to greet him and utilise his services.—E. J. B. ALLEN, Sec.

ISLINGTON.

THE Comrades of "Merrie Islington" are certainly justifying their existence as a branch of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and can, without undue egotism, look back upon a month's hard propaganda and feel highly satisfied with the results thereof.

Our morning meeting of Sunday, September 4th, in Finsbury Park, established, I believe, a record for the party. A large audience listened while Comrade Lehane stated the case for Socialism as the only solution for the many evils and problems that exist around us, and at the close of the address subscribed 15s. 4½d. to our war chest, besides purchasing 8 pamphlets and 69 copies of The Socialist Standard. The rest of our Sunday meetings, although not quite such financial successes, have resulted in good sales of literature. Plenty of questions are always

forthcoming, and are always satisfactorily dealt with.

Wednesday evening meetings at Highbury Corner are also making good progress, in fact, the encouraging feature of all our meetings is the increasing number of men who stay throughout, buying our pamphlets and putting questions, while in the result some have reached that stage where they deem it to be their duty to join us and help in the fight.

All things considered, we are going strong. Since our formation we have had the *best* mass meeting, the *best* ordinary propaganda meeting, our list of guarantees for the Press Fund is the *highest*, we have accounted for 247 copies of the paper, and we believe that by the end of the season our number of recruits will be the *greatest* of all the branches. To put it briefly, the Islington Branch of the S.P.G.B. promises to be the "greatest thing on earth."

A. E. DOWDESWELL, *Branch Reporter*.

PECKHAM.

I CAN with pleasure review the work put in by our members during the last month. We have good branch meetings and members turn up well at our propaganda meetings. On Peckham Rye on Sundays it is sometimes difficult to get a meeting at first; but we always succeed eventually. Take last Sunday as an instance: E. J. B. Allen gave an effective lecture; he was followed by H. Martin and H. Belsey. The audience showing no inclination to disperse Allen continued and finished up. Some good spade work by means of impromptu discussion followed; by this means new members have been made.

I should like to call the attention of all comrades to our Friday evening discussions, which take place at our branch rooms, 33, High Street. We promise all comrades and friends who attend these discussions an enjoyable evening; like *Oliver Twist*, they will want more.

We have been pushing *THE SOCIALIST STANDARD* well, and have already sold over 200 copies, and if we do not sell out our stock it will not be our fault.—W. RUSSELL.

WATFORD.

A MONTH of plodding endeavour, with good meetings every Sunday—good in point of attendance, good in point of literature sales, with good speakers stating the case for inadjectival Socialism so clearly that a wayfaring man though a fool could not make a mistake as to the issues.

As well as may be, we are doing the work the Socialist is called upon to do—the preliminary spade work necessary to the organisation of a class conscious working class party—and doing it in face of the added difficulties that the existence of a perfect shoal of peddling reform parties—born of the ill-informed and misdirected exuberance of a few local reformers—inevitably create.

For a comparatively small town the number of these parties is, to put it mildly, abnormal, and it is no great wonder that, with so much to distract and divert their attention from the consideration of the real problem underlying their condition, the workers should not readily appreciate their class standing and the necessity for organisation upon the basis of the class struggle as the indispensable condition of successful conflict with capitalism.

If our ardent local new-party mongers (a brand new reforming body is turned out about every month) would but stop to think sometimes, they might be able to understand that every one of the insignificant and ludicrous little parties is simply a further factor making for working class confusion—simply one more division of the available working class intelligence that might otherwise be focussed upon first causes of, and real remedies for, working class ills; one more obstacle that will have to be overcome before Labour can enter into its own.

What the workers of Watford and elsewhere want is a straight lead upon a clear issue, and it is precisely because they have never had the one given them, and the other kept plainly before them; it is precisely because they have been led to follow the fantasy of reform, and have found themselves at the end of their journey in very much the position they formerly occupied, that they to-day are sullen, disconso-

The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

CENTRAL OFFICE:

COMMUNIST CLUB,

107, CHARLOTTE ST., LONDON. W.

General Secretary - - C. LEHANE.

BRANCH DIRECTORY.

BATTERSEA.—A. Jones, Secretary, 3, Mathew St., Latchmere Estate, Battersea, S.W. Branch meets every Monday at 8.30 p.m. at Sydney Hall, York Road, Battersea, S.W.

CENTRAL.—Business transacted every Saturday at the Communist Club, 107, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, London, W. Membership in the Central Branch can be obtained only through the Executive Committee. Applications should be sent to the General Secretary.

CLERKENWELL.—Kate Hawkins, sec., 91, Cavendish Buildings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C. Branch meets every Tuesday at 8.30 p.m. at Secretary's address.

EAST LONDON (Central).—W. Woodhouse, Sec., 95, Kirby St., Poplar, E. Branch meets every Friday at the address given.

EDMONTON.—A. Jacobs, Secretary, 26, Oxford Rd., Lower Edmonton, N. Business meetings every Wednesday at 8.30 p.m.

FULHAM.—E. J. B. Allen, Secretary, 49, Mablethorpe Rd., Fulham Cross, S.W. Branch meets every Wednesday at 8.30 p.m.

ISLINGTON.—J. McNicol, Secretary, 179, Isledon Rd., Finsbury Park, N. Branch meets every Tuesday at 8.30 p.m., at the Co-operative Stores, 79, Grove Road, Holloway, N.

PADDINGTON.—F. C. Watts, Sec., 154, Ashmore Road, Paddington, W. Branch meets every Wednesday at 8.30 p.m., at Ollins' Coffee Tavern (foot of Lock Bridge), Harrow Road.

PECKHAM.—W. Wren, Secretary, 91, Evelina Rd., Nunhead, S.E. Branch meets every Monday at 8.30 p.m., at 33, High St., Peckham, S.E.

SOUTHWARK.—S. Eden, Secretary, 63, Penrose St., Walworth. Branch meets every Friday at 8.30 p.m., at the Café, Walworth.

TOOTING.—C. Goss, Secretary, 73, Balham Grove, Balham, S.W. Branch meets every alternate Tuesday, 8 p.m., at the "Nelson Coffee Tavern," 60, High St., Tooting.

WATFORD.—D. R. Newlands, Secretary, 5, Highfield Rd., Bushey, Herts. Branch meets every Friday at 8 p.m., 73, Harwoods Rd., Watford. Economic Class every Sunday at 3 p.m.

WEST HAM.—G. J. Hodson, Secretary, 'Kelmescott,' Sidney Road, Forest Gate, E. Branch meets every alternate Wednesday at 8.30 p.m. at the address given.

WOOD GREEN.—J. Crump, Secretary, 10, Stanley Villas, Westbury Avenue, Wood Green, N. Branch meets every Thursday at 8.30 p.m.

late, and recalcitrant.

And so the reformer must go into the category of working class enemies, and must be fought as strenuously as the hard-grained proletarian ignorance and apathy, the more so because he is the apathy producer, the ignorance perpetuator.—ALEC GRAY.

WEST HAM.

GOING strong! Held meetings every Sunday night, with one exception (speaker disappointed) since last report. *STANDARD* and pamphlets selling well, latter a good sign. Assisted with meetings at Poplar and Ilford. At latter place the Romford Division Branch has been formed. We are now endeavouring to arrange a combined attack of the two branches (West Ham and Romford) upon the new town of East Ham, where a Socialist Party is urgently needed, the distress being very great. Unemployed demonstrations and deputations to the Council have already started. The numbers of the unemployed all over the area covered by the West Ham Union are already growing rapidly, so that they promise to be very large indeed as soon as winter sets in. I should not be surprised if the local administrative bodies do not find that they have a little more than they can handle when they attempt to deal with the "Unemployed question" this year.—G.H.

WOOD GREEN.

SINCE my last report, in addition to excellent meetings on Jolly Butchers' Hill, we have extended our activities to the West Green Corner of High Road, Tottenham. Our first meeting on this spot was held on Sunday evening, Sept. 4, and was certainly a success both from the standpoint of numbers and of interest, as shown by questions touching our principles. *THE SOCIALIST STANDARD* sold well. Meetings have been held every Sunday since with equal success, and in the very near future the Tottenham Branch of the party will surely be formed.—JOHN CRUMP.

LECTURE LIST, October, 1904.

BATTERSEA.—Prince of Wales Head, York Road, 11.30, Oct. 2, H. Nearmann; Oct. 9, J. Fitzgerald; Oct. 16, J. Crump; Oct. 23, E. J. B. Allen; Oct. 30, H. Nearman.

Prince of Wales' Head, York Road, 6.30 p.m.: Oct. 2, H. Belsey; Oct. 9, J. Fitzgerald; Oct. 16, H. C. Phillips; Oct. 23, H. Belsey; Oct. 30, E. J. B. Allen.

BOW (E. LONDON).—Obelisk, Devon's Road, Poplar, 11.30: Oct. 2, W. Woodhouse; Oct. 9, C. Lehané; Oct. 16, W. Woodhouse; Oct. 23, Branch; Oct. 30, J. Fitzgerald.

EDMONTON.—The Green, 11.30, Oct. 2, T. A. Jackson; Oct. 9, A. Anderson; Oct. 16, J. Fitzgerald; Oct. 23, A. Anderson; Oct. 30, A. Jacobs.

Angel Road, 7, Oct. 2, C. Lehané; Oct. 9, H. Belsey; 16, J. Fitzgerald; 23, R. Elrick; Oct. 30, A. Anderson.

FINSBURY PARK (ISLINGTON).—Finsbury Park, 11.30, Oct. 2, C. Lehané; Oct. 9, Branch; Oct. 16, H. J. Hawkins; Oct. 23, F. C. Watts; Oct. 30, H. Belsey.

Finsbury Park, 5, Oct. 2, R. Kenny; Oct. 9, H. J. Hawkins; Oct. 16, F. Leigh; Oct. 23, A. Aldbery; Oct. 30, T. Allen.

FULHAM.—Waterford Road, 11.30, Oct. 2, E. J. B. Allen; Oct. 9, H. Nearman; Oct. 16, H. Belsey; Oct. 23, T. A. Jackson; Oct. 30, J. Crump.

HIGHBURY (ISLINGTON).—Highbury Corner. Every Wednesday at 8.30, C. Lehané, R. Elrick, J. Fitzgerald, and others.

MILE END (E. LONDON).—Mile End Waste, 7, Oct. 2, T. Allen; Oct. 9, W. Woodhouse; Oct. 16, R. Todd; Oct. 23, W. Woodhouse; Oct. 30, R. Todd.

PADDINGTON.—Prince of Wales, Harrow Road, 11.30, Oct. 2, F. C. Watts; Oct. 9, T. Allen; Oct. 16, E. J. B. Allen; Oct. 23, H. J. Hawkins; Oct. 30, J. Richmond.

PECKHAM.—Peckham Rye, 6.30, Oct. 2, A. Aldbery; Oct. 9, E. J. B. Allen; Oct. 16, F. C. Watts; Oct. 23, H. C. Phillips; Oct. 30, C. Lehané.

REGENT'S PARK.—Regent's Park, 11.30, Oct. 2, H. J. Hawkins; Oct. 9, F. C. Watts; Oct. 16, F. Leigh; Oct. 23, J. Richmond; Oct. 30, T. Allen.

SOUTHWARK.—Kennington Triangle, 11.30, Oct. 2, H. Belsey; Oct. 9, A. Aldbery; Oct. 16, H. Nearman; Oct. 23, H. Belsey; Oct. 30, C. Lehané.

TOOTING.—Gathon Road, 11.30, Oct. 2, J. Crump; Oct. 9, H. Belsey; Oct. 16, A. Aldbery; Oct. 23, J. Fitzgerald; Oct. 30, F. C. Watts.

Tooting Broadway, 6.30, Oct. 2, A. Anderson; Oct. 9, F. Leigh; Oct. 16, H. Belsey; Oct. 23, J. Fitzgerald; Oct. 30, T. A. Jackson.

Tooting Broadway, Wednesdays, 8 p.m., Branch.

TOTTENHAM.—West Green Corner, 7, Oct. 2, T. A. Jackson; Oct. 9, A. Anderson; Oct. 16, C. Lehané; Oct. 23, R. Kenny; Oct. 30, F. Leigh.

WATFORD.—Market Place, 7, Oct. 2, J. Fitzgerald; Oct. 9, F. C. Watts; 16, T. Allen; Oct. 23, C. Lehané; Oct. 30, H. J. Hawkins.

WEST HAM.—Wanstead Park Station, 7, Oct. 2, Branch; Oct. 9, C. Lehané; Oct. 16, Branch; Oct. 23, A. Anderson; Oct. 30, J. Fitzgerald.

WOOD GREEN.—Jolly Butchers Hill, 11.30, Oct. 2, T. Jacobs; Oct. 9, H. J. Hawkins; Oct. 16, R. Kenny; Oct. 23, J. Crump; Oct. 30, T. A. Jackson.

All Communications to
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